



U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative

**2026 Special Request for
for an Updated
Economic Study on USWBSI'S
Impact on Reducing FHB**

Issued September 4, 2026

For more information:

nfo@scabusa.org

517.290.5023

Introduction & Overview

Special Request for Economic Study Proposals



USWBSI Coordination, Action Plan Research Priorities, and Funding Authority

This special request for Economic Study Proposals is coordinated by the U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI) a national multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional research consortium whose goal is to develop effective control measures that minimize the threat of Fusarium Head Blight (scab), including the production of mycotoxins, for wheat and barley. The USWBSI's mission is: **"To enhance food safety and supply by reducing the impact of Fusarium Head Blight (scab) on wheat and barley."** Make sure to review the [USWBSI Action Plan](#) to ensure your proposal is aligned with the priorities of the USWBSI. An overview of USWBSI's structure and recent quantifiable outcomes is also included in Addendum A.

Eligibility & Applicable Regulations

Eligibility requirements specify that funding can only be made to eligible principal investigators at [land-grant colleges and universities](#) in the U.S. or to USDA-ARS scientists. This award will be established as a subaward under the USWBSI Networking & Facilitation Office cooperative agreement with USDA.

Conformance with Instructions for Proposal Preparation

It is important that all proposals conform to the instructions provided in this special request. The USWBSI's Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) may return submissions that are not consistent with these instructions. The NFO must authorize any deviations from these instructions in advance of submission. Deviations must be authorized by written approval from the USWBSI Researcher Co-Chair or the NFO Director of Operations.

Project Duration and Continuations

The proposal funding has availability for up to two award periods. Initial funding would be provided as a subaward from the USWBSI NFO's current agreement through April 30, 2027. The estimated funding expected to be available for year one of funding is up to \$70K. USWBSI's funding is determined annually, as such an optional second subaward for the period of May 1, 2027-April 30, 2028 could also be considered, but is not guaranteed. Please indicate in proposal if a second year is needed and outline objectives for second year with estimated budget.

Expected Deliverables

- Analysis conducted with initial Presentation of Results to the USWBSI Steering Committee in April 2027 (specific date to be determined) and a written progress report at the conclusion of the subaward terms.
- Updated Economic Report for USWBSI Publication, to be available publicly no later than December 2027.

Review Process, Funding Recommendations and Funding Applications

All proposals received by the assigned deadline will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and if necessary, they may modify or request adjustments to conform to the overall objectives of the Initiative. Please note that all proposals will be regarded as confidential documents. Distribution will be limited only to parties involved within the review process. The Executive Committee's recommendation will then be presented to the Steering Committee. Upon approval by the Steering Committee, the selected PIs recommended for funding by the USWBSI will be notified by the USWBSI NFO on steps for initiating the subaward.

Questions? Need Assistance?

If you have any questions regarding the pre-proposal process, please contact the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative's Networking and Facilitation Office by phone at 517.290.5023 or nfo@scabusa.org.

Instructions

Special Proposal for Economic Study on USWBSI's Impact on Reducing FHB

Priority Alignment

USWBSI's coordinated research has advanced the understanding and management of Fusarium Head Blight (FHB) in small grain production. This research has led to the availability of new FHB resistant varieties, quantified effectiveness of fungicides, and developed integrated disease management strategies. Effective communication and outreach of research outcomes and impact to key stakeholders is critical to ensure the effective implementation of disease control practices for mitigating FHB in wheat and barley. An initial study was first conducted and published as the [2017 Economic Impact of USWBSI's Scab Initiative to Reduce FHB Study](#) in September 2017. The findings from the report have provided significant value over the years, serving as a cornerstone for demonstrating the initiative's real-world financial impact to stakeholders. The USWBSI would like to build on the insights gained from the 2017 findings and revise its information to include the most up-to-date data.

Proposals should:

- Outline the intended approach to update and build on the success and utility of the 2017 Economic Impact Study.
- Update and refine the financial impact metrics of FHB and USWBSI mitigation efforts using current yield, price, and management cost data and provide a return-on-investment analysis.
- Focus on the geographical regions and crop types funded by the USWBSI (Barley, Durum, Hard Winter Wheat, Soft Winter Wheat, Hard Red Spring Wheat) to be covered by the study.
- Outline the economic modeling and data-collection methods to be used to assess real-world financial losses prevented by scab management and resistant cultivars.
- Detail primary and secondary data sources (e.g., USDA data, variety trial yields, farm-level adoption rates).
- If possible, compare economic outcomes across several growing seasons (multi-year results).
- Translate summative economic findings into accessible, impactful communications for stakeholder audiences.
- Outline how the FHB community input will be incorporated and define how subject matter experts (breeder and plant pathologist) can be actively involved on the team.
- Provide a clear timeline mapping data collection, economic modeling, report drafting, peer/expert review, and presentation/publication rollout. Year 1 timeline is available October 2026-April 30, 2027. If a second year is requested specify project components to be achieved from May 1, 2027-April 30, 2028 separately.

Expected Deliverables

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- Updated Economic Report for USWBSI publication, to be available publicly no later than December 2027.

Key Deadlines

Category 4 Special – FHB Economic Impact Study	Deadline for PIs to submit Proposal(s) and supporting documents All submissions need to be uploaded via the USWBSI Economic Impact Submission Form	September 18, 2026
	Proposal Review and Funding Determinations	September 21-30, 2026*
	PIs Notified of Proposal Decision	October 1, 2026*

* Timeline for review and notifications is projected, and subject to change. All submitters will be notified by the USWBSI Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) regarding final timing.

PI Steps for Submission

STEP 1

Pre-Proposal Submission Requirements

All PIs must complete the proposal submission form and budget template. Requirements for the submission must include and adhere to the following:

Proposal Cover Page

The proposal summary and description materials should be developed as one Word Doc file in the order noted.

Principal Investigator Contact Information

Provide key contact details for Lead PI and all Co-PIs involved on the project on the cover page. The Lead PI's signature is required.

Project Title of Proposed Research

The title of the project proposal must be brief yet represent the major thrust of the project. Because this title will be used to provide information to those who may not be familiar with the proposed project, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible.

Budget Requested Amounts

On cover page indicate the total requested budget amount, an amount for October 2026-April 30, 2027 is currently available. An OPTIONAL request for year two can also be included.

Project Summary & Description

The following materials should adhere to the requirements as specified.

Project Summary

Fill in the Project Summary Page (limited to 2 pages), using Calibri or Times New Roman 12-point font, and include the following:

- Project Title (same as what is included in the submission form)
- Project PI, Institution and Co-PI(s), Institution(s)
- Project Summary

The text for this portion of the project summary **should not exceed 400 words** and should focus on the following (**all four bullets below must be addressed**):

- Overall project goal(s)
- Project Objectives (list in numbered format) and Expected Outcome(s) for each objective
- Approaches that will be used to accomplish project goal(s) within the period of proposed work
- Statement of Mutual Interest (i.e. how will stakeholders/end-users benefit from this research)

Project Description (Statement of Work)

The Project Description should immediately follow the Project Summary. The Project Description should provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and must include objectives for the period of the proposed work. The Project Description should be formatted using Calibri or Times New Roman 12-point font. Bold formatting should only be used for section headings or used minimally to emphasize importance or significance. **NOTE:** Digital images/tables/figures inserted into the Project Description must fit within the ten (10) page limit.

The Project Description should not exceed ten (10) pages in length (including tables and figures) and should describe in clear, concrete terms the substance of the proposed project including the following:

Included within the 10-Page Limit (including figures and tables)

- Title. Same as what is included on the Cover Page and Project Summary
- Introduction. A clear statement of the goal(s) and supporting objectives, target audience and outreach methods of proposed project should be included. Supporting data pertinent to the proposed project may be included in this section. Present and discuss published literature that is directly related to, and supports, the proposed project.
- USWBSI Action Plan Alignment. Relevance of the project to the goals of the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative with specific reference to the applicable priorities listed in the Action Plan clearly stated. The Action Plan can be viewed at https://scabusa.org/pdfs/uswbsi_action-plan_web.pdf.
- Rationale and Significance. It is understood that FHB is a devastating disease. Acknowledgment of this fact should require no more than one sentence. Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project; identify the gaps in the knowledge base that your proposed project is trying to fill.
- Research Materials and Methods. Specifically, this section must include:
 - The hypotheses or questions being asked
 - Techniques, materials and methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the techniques. (Describe in step-by-step fashion exactly what techniques, materials and methods will be used and plans for preservation, documentation, and sharing of findings.)
 - Results expected
 - Means by which results will be analyzed or interpreted
 - Pitfalls that may be encountered
 - A detailed (but tentative) schedule/timeline for conducting major steps.

NOT Counted Toward the 10-Page Limit – Supplemental Information for the Project Description

Additionally, the following items can be included to support the project description (these items will not be counted toward the ten (10) page maximum).

- References to Project Description. Reference information is required of references cited in the Project Description. Pls must follow accepted scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials. While there is no established page limitation for the references, this section must include bibliographic citations only, and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the project description.
- Collaborative Letters of Support or Sub-contractual Arrangements. If the nature of the proposed project requires collaboration or contractual arrangements with other research scientists, corporations, organizations, agencies, etc., the applicant must identify the collaborator(s) and provide a detailed explanation of the nature of the collaboration. Evidence in the form of a letter of collaboration (may be in the form of an e-mail) from all collaborators must be provided to assure reviewers that collaborators or sub-contractors involved have agreed to render the indicated services. The letter of collaboration must include specific details describing the services the collaborator will provide.

PI and Co-Investigator Background Information

To assist peer reviewers in assessing the competence and experience of the proposed collaborators. The Lead PI and all personnel working on the project should provide their certified USDA Common Form CV and Current and Pending Support (CPS) forms prepared in [SciENCv](#), provided as separate PDF files.

Budget Materials

This award will be established as a subaward under the USWBSI Networking & Facilitation Office cooperative agreement with USDA which is facilitated through the University of Minnesota. The following detailed budget documentation is required. An Excel template with built-in formulas, space for your justification narrative, and auto-generation of the Budget Summary page is provided. Make sure to double-check that all of your details transfer to the summary as intended and all totals match.

Budget Justification Worksheet & Summary

Utilizing the **Excel Budget Justification Worksheet & Budget Summary Template**, complete all the relevant sections and follow the instructions included in the file. The prepared budget should reflect work from time of notice of award through April 30, 2027. If second year of funding requested, attach separate second budget template with those details and specific for Year 2 (May 1, 2027-April 30, 2028).

NOTE: Narrative budget justification for all line-items where funds are requested is required. The narrative descriptive details must be provided within the budget template to justify the request.

When preparing your budget keep in mind:

- **Indirect Cost (IDC) Limitation Policy:** As part of the 2018 Farm Bill - Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 – signed into law (Public Law 115-334) on 12/20/18 and extended through 09/30/26, a fixed Indirect Cost Limitation of 10% was established ([See Title VII, Subtitle C, Section 7303](#), page 332 of bill; page 336 of PDF). Universities may voluntarily elect to use a percentage below 10% for pre-proposals submitted to the USWBSI, however they **cannot charge a rate higher than 10%**. A formula is included in the budget template to determine the 10% limitation amount, or if lower amount it can be entered instead.
NOTE: Indirect Costs are not applicable to ARS Scientists.

Subrecipient Commitment Form (University of Minnesota requirement if selected as award recipient)
The award will be provided as a subaward from the Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) agreement facilitated through the University of Minnesota. If selected, an additional Subrecipient Commitment form will also be required to allow for processing through the University of Minnesota. It will be provided upon notification by the USWBSI Co-Chairs that the proposal has been selected for funding. Please make sure to complete all the relevant sections and follow the instructions included to ensure prompt processing.

STEP 2

Proposal Submission

All proposals must be submitted to the USWBSI Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) Director of Operations via the [USWBSI Economic Impact Submission Form](#) **no later than September 18, 2026**. A confirmation email will be sent to submitters from the NFO upon receipt of the submission. If a confirmation is not received, please contact the NFO to confirm receipt.

PI Required Items Checklist for Submission Process

STEP 1

- ☐ Prepare key details for Project Proposal Form
 - ☐ Cover page PI contact information, details and signature
 - ☐ Project Summary and Description (as one DOC file meeting requirements noted)
 - ☐ Project Summary (should not exceed 400 words)
 - ☐ Project Description (should not exceed 10 pages including tables and figures)
 - ☐ Supplemental Project Description Items (if required, not included in page limit)
 - ☐ References to Project Description
 - ☐ Letters from Collaborators
- ☐ Provide Lead PI and Co-Investigator(s) USDA Common Form CV and CPS PDF files as one Zip file
- ☐ Prepare Budget Justification Worksheet & Summary Template
 - Required, one template for time of award notice October 2026 until April 30, 2027
 - Optional, separate additional budget template if requesting for May 1, 2027-April 30, 2028

STEP 2

- ☐ Finalize and submit proposal via the [USWBSI Economic Impact Submission Form](#) **by September 18, 2026**



Cultivating FHB Research-Based Solutions for the U.S.

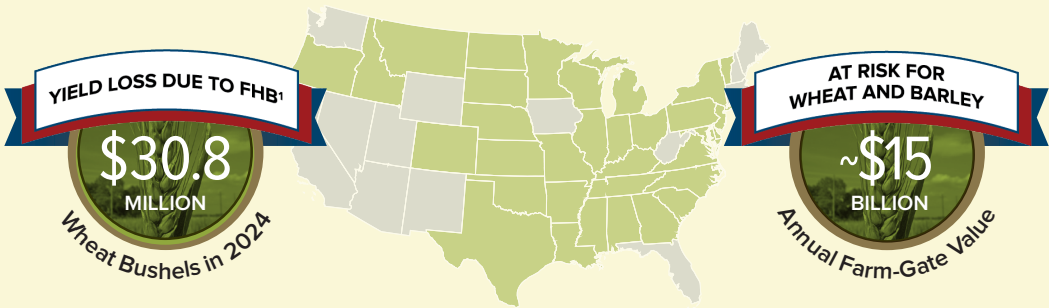
Fusarium head blight (scab) is one of the most significant crop diseases that threatens American agriculture. Scab impacts cereals, particularly wheat and barley, by reducing crop yield and quality with outbreaks reported in more than 30 states. The U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI) offers a stakeholder-driven collaborative model for research aimed at protecting the nation’s wheat and barley crops from this devastating disease.

Practical Need for Answers

With FHB epidemics occurring at higher frequencies and expanding into additional U.S. states, as well as increased FHB risk from changing production practices, now is a critical time for continued discovery of targeted, research-driven FHB solutions that can be implemented by wheat and barley farmers.

FHB Threat

The disease affects wheat and barley yield and quality through kernel damage; while resulting mycotoxins contaminate grain, impacting marketability and food safety.



Innovative Ecosystem

Addressing a \$15 billion risk requires a solid and synchronized infrastructure with stable national funding. The USWBSI model connects four critical components to transform scientific potential into on-farm results.



FEDERAL LEADERSHIP

USDA-ARS

Administers \$15 Million in FHB research authorized in the Farm Bill, with up to \$8.6M allocated to USWBSI coordinated research and remainder to USDA-ARS



STATE RESEARCH ENGINE

Land Grant Universities & USDA-ARS State Offices

Executes research through 86 principal investigators across 30+ states, training 125+ future ag leaders; existing infrastructure and talent avoids duplication of resources while investing in ongoing pursuit of FHB answers



INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

Milling, Brewing, Crop Protection, Pasta & Seed

Provides insight into food and feed chains from farm to consumer, sets quality standards and advocates for safety and continued research



FARMER ENGAGEMENT

Wheat & Barley Grower Commissions & Farmers

Ensures research targets timely problems, and addresses on-farm needs; 1,000+ farmers and extension/crop consultants connect throughout growing season via FHB Risk Tool monitoring and alerts

¹ SOURCE: Anderson, N., et al. [Wheat Disease Loss Estimates from the United States and Canada—2024](#). 2025. Crop Protection Network. CPN-3018-24. doi.org/10.31274/cpn-20250324-0.

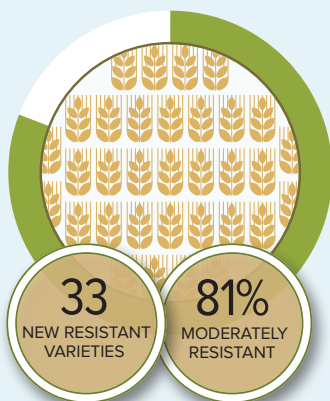
Quantifiable Outcomes

By integrating cutting-edge research with real-time data, USWBSI outcomes minimize the economic impact to farmers, food and feed processors, and brewers and strengthen food safety and supply.

Recent Annual Outcomes

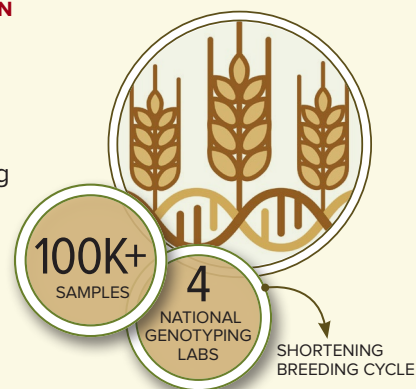
GENETIC ADVANCEMENT

Releasing new resistant varieties — with 33 in FY24 alone, the majority (81%) achieving “moderately resistant” status — offers farmers a key strategy for reducing losses due to FHB and DON.



GENOMIC ACCELERATION

Processing high-throughput analysis on tens of thousands of DNA samples annually, is identifying new mechanisms of resistance and shortening the breeding cycle.



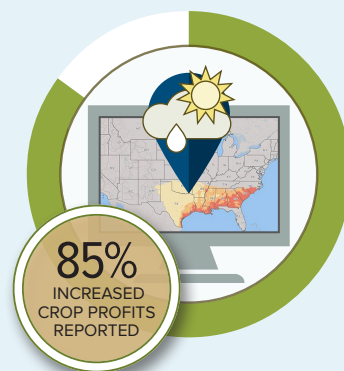
DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Validating best practices through nationwide trials in 20+ states, provides evaluation of new fungicide chemistries and application technologies to ensure optimal crop health.



PREDICTIVE INTELLIGENCE

Empowering farmers in impacted states with the **FHB Risk Tool**, a real-time platform using weather modeling to forecast disease risk, guides precise application decisions; 85% of the 1,000+ users indicate increased crop profits.



FOOD SAFETY

Assessing mycotoxin levels in 44,500+ research samples ensures the selection of new varieties and fungicides that ultimately block toxins from entering the food supply chain for processors and end-users.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

Measuring the results, a comprehensive economic study confirmed USWBSI's massive impact, citing for every \$1 invested, the USWBSI generates \$71 in benefits.²



² SOURCE: Wilson, W., et al. (2017). Economic Impact of USWBSI's Scab Initiative to Reduce Fusarium Head Blight. Agribusiness and Applied Economics No. 774.



U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI)

CO-CHAIRS

Andrew Friskop, andrew.j.friskop@ndsu.edu
Richard Magnusson, rmags@wiktel.com

NETWORKING & FACILITATION OFFICE (NFO)

495 Borlaug Hall | 1991 Upper Buford Circle | St. Paul, MN 55108

nfo@scabusa.org | 517.290.5023 | <https://scabusa.org>

